

day resort of the mind, a kind of desert Riviera. Without exaggeration, I think our future will take this form – and not that of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* or *Brave New World*, despite the visionary power of these masterpieces. I imagine above all a country-club paradise, where leisure is the ultimate form of work, and work the ultimate form of leisure. Where is Vermilion Sands? No doubt somewhere between Palm Springs and Ipanema, between Miami and La Grande Motte.

– From *Le livre d'or de la science-fiction: J. G. Ballard* (1980; back-translated from Robert Louit's French by DP)

"The Subliminal Man"

(January 1963)

Given the voracious needs of the modern consumer-goods society, who can blame the merchandisers for doing their best to keep up with us? The kind of psychological force-feeding that I describe in "The Subliminal Man" isn't that different from the efforts I was making at the time cramming large amounts of what seemed to be upmarket pet-foods down the throats of my three infants. Even the most extreme stratagem was, after all, for their own good. I mention this because I don't see the central character of the story as entirely a victim.

– From *The Best of J. G. Ballard* (1977)

"A Question of Re-Entry"

(March 1963)

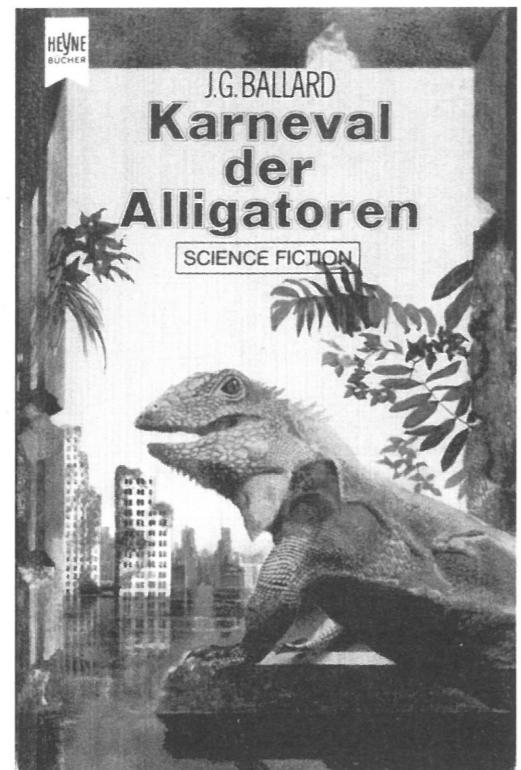
Few sights, since I looked up as a startled 14-year-old in a Japanese camp near Shanghai at a sky filled with hundreds of B-29s, have moved me as much as that of the Echo 1 satellite traversing the nights sky in the early 60s. The first of a series of huge aluminium balloons, it sped like a surfer through the star-sea, the first tangible evidence of the Age of Space. (It was sad, some ten years later, to point out to a neighbour the speeding light-point of the last Skylab mission, whose crew had been circling the globe for three months. "Who?" he asked, taking for granted that things moved in the sky. I knew then that the Space Age was over.) What interested me was the effect the visible satellites might have on the imprinted star-maps of migratory birds, or even ourselves. Albatross might roost in England in winter, some latter-day remittance man might find himself running half the Amazon...

– From *The Best of J. G. Ballard* (1977)

"End-Game" (June 1963)

Whether it is conducted in a police station, a confessional or on the psychiatrist's couch, the quest for a guilty conscience has long been part of the arsenal of the qualified interrogator. Whether the subject is a victim of political terror, a believer or a mental patient, as soon as his unconscious accepts the notion of his own guilt (irrespective of his actual innocence – if these terms make sense), he knows that the chips are down: the victim, morally and psychologically, is forever at the mercy of the questioner. In "End-Game," I reversed this plan. It seemed to me that in daily life, far from believing ourselves innocent, we consciously take our guilt for granted. The competent interrogator will await the growth in his victim's unconscious of the idea of his own innocence before pronouncing his inevitable guilt...

– From *Le livre d'or de la science-fiction: J. G. Ballard* (1980; back-translated from Robert Louit's French by DP)



"The Lost Leonardo" (March 1964)

I wrote "The Lost Leonardo" as a simple entertainment – without, however, taking its central character's problem too lightly. In fact, it found several readers – above all in the United States, where the story first appeared – who assumed that the painting I described in it, da Vinci's "Crucifixion," really existed. Some even tried to hunt it down in the museums of Europe. And I in turn was almost persuaded of its existence. Whenever I happen to visit the Prado, the Uffizi or the Louvre, I

almost expect to find it there...

– From *Le livre d'or de la science-fiction: J. G. Ballard* (1980; back-translated from Robert Louit's French by DP)

"The Terminal Beach" (March 1964)

"The Terminal Beach" was the last story of mine to be printed by Ted Carnell, and is for me the most important story I have written. It marks the link between the science fiction of my first ten years, and the next phase of my writings that led to *The Atrocity Exhibition* and *Crash*. What impresses me most now is that the story was ever printed in the first place – *New Worlds* was, after all, a wholly commercial sf magazine. These were the days before the modern literature departments had begun to erect their plywood partitions around the chafed elbows of science-fiction writers.

– From *The Best of J. G. Ballard* (1977)

"The Drowned Giant" (June 1964)

Gulliver's Travels is a classic of imaginative literature. Personally, I have always asked myself what would have happened if Gulliver had been washed up dead, rather than alive, on the shore at Lilliput. In writing this story, I did not dream of producing a moral tale which commented on man's inhumanity and lack of pity. Even today I consider that "The Drowned Giant" deals above all with time, with the disintegration which affects even the most abstract universe. No system can defeat the entropy which is inherent in it. The fate of the giant seems to me particularly serene. Lying on a beach, at the edge of the tide, I sometimes imagine myself quite contentedly at home.

– From *Le livre d'or de la science-fiction: J. G. Ballard* (1980; back-translated from Robert Louit's French by DP)

"You and Me and the Continuum" (March 1966)

The theme of sacrifice led me to think of the Messiah or, more exactly, the idea of the second coming and how this might take place in the twentieth century. In my version, which I would describe as a botched second coming, the Messiah never quite managing to come to terms with the twentieth century, I have used a fragmentary and non-sequential technique ... and have tried to invoke some of the images that a twentieth century Messiah might see. You'll notice that the entries are alphabetized.

– From story-blurb (*Impulse* no. 1, March 1966)

The ICHNEUMON and the DORMEUSE

Terry Dowling

This time was different. This time on his way past the tombs, Beni turned left, ignored the guard Stones of the nearer mounds and headed down the path through the trees to the wide low tumulus where her tomb was.

He granted that the Stones had him, though nothing showed it. The tumulus was quiet under the hot afternoon sun, the trees, the grass barely stirred, the fields stretched away to meet the sky. The only movement was the heat shimmer on the other tomb mounds and the endless pull of the sentry Stones.

The Nothing Stones were neither stones nor quite filled with nothing, though that was the sense they gave, all 16 of them, low basaltic pillars two metres high, as wide as his shoulders, as deep as his thigh, standing in the usual henge circle around the foot of the tumulus itself.

Their onyx-black, outward-facing sides were filled with stars, converging points of light, and while Beni would not look into those glossy midnight fields, he knew that if he remained, if they didn't have him already, the darkling, star-ridden massebots would solve his mysteries, totes and sly conditionings and come to snatch him away, pulling, pulling, grabbing at sight and mind, close obsidian in the hot afternoon.

Always assume the Stones have you, Ramirez had said, told him now in memory, the greatest tomb-rober of them all, and Beni did so, leaving it to his auto-

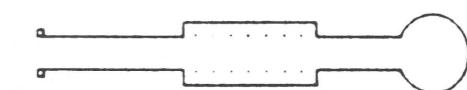
nomic tote systems to sort out. If they had him in a trance loop, he'd probably soon know. He continued through the perimeter henge, leaving the deadly megaliths at his back and headed down the access ramp to the black gulf of the doorway.

Doorway not door. None of the old tumulus tombs had ever had doors. Beni stood before the quiet, porcelain-smooth, darkened throat in the side of its vast, low hill and called out.

"Dormeuse! Dormeuse! You have a visitor!"

The words echoed against the ceramic, died. There was only stillness, silence again, smooth cool midnight before him, daylight and blazing summer behind.

Beni, tech'd and toted, wearing a flamer he'd been told he probably wouldn't use, carrying a metre-long touchpole over his back as nearly all tomb-robbers did, just in case, now brought up his wrist display, saw what the optics gave.



Classic plan clear and sure. Free of the Stones too, if he could trust the readings. It was the standard schema confirmed by all the survivors (most of all by Ramirez himself, one of the very few to make it back